

Contributions

A SICKNESS NOT UNTO DEATH

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We not infrequently hear people say in a careless, flippant sort of way, "I am sick of this miserable business." While we may and should be "sick" of many "miserable" things, we should cultivate such a digestion that only dangerous things would sicken us. It is all right to get sick of worldly vanities, of insufferable selfishness, of the universal trickery and fraud practiced in prevalent business methods.

We should not sicken of things that are, in any way helpful to humanity on its spiritual side. We should not view the interests of the church in a light that would cause the least bit of physical or spiritual disorder. Such a sickness would be "unto spiritual death." If we sicken at the weekly religious service, the prayer meeting, the contribution basket, the sermonic appeal in behalf of any of the paramount interests of the church we are in danger of death.

Just now I seem to hear some of the brethren say, "I am sick of Moomaw's everlasting appeals in behalf of the 'endowment of the institutions of the church.'" Well I am rather glad that, on account of your low spiritual state, these appeals have made you sick. There is hope of a man who realizes that he is sick. There is a physician for persons in that state. "The whole need not a physician but they who are sick."

We offer you a remedy. Did you ever hear of the stingy Christian who was called on to give some article of food to a suffering neighbor. He went into a well-filled meat house and took down a ham. He thought it was too large and the devil of stinginess told him to get a smaller one, and he did so. The evil imp repeated the suggestion until the ham grew so small that it alarmed the brother for its meanness. A healthy spasm of generosity siezed him, his good angel came to him, and he sought the largest piece in the house, and then another, and finally, he told the low-down devil that if he did not leave he would give the last bit in the house. The best way to get rid of such a devil is to do just the opposite thing to what he suggested. So if he tells you not to endow the institutions of the church (for he knows that to succeed "the institutions of the church must be endowed") you just go and write out a pledge for double what you at first thought to give, or any sort of a sum, from one dollar to a thousand, and just see what a joyous ripple of genuinely sick waves of spiritual life will thrill your soul. Try it brother, sister.

I'm therefore real glad that I made you sick that I may have a chance to bring you to health again. Persons seldom appreciate health till they get sick. Such a sickness is "not unto death." Therefore I repeat, by way of emphasis, in order to impress its importance, that "the institutions of the church must be endowed."

THE GREAT COMMISSION—Matthew 28:18-20

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I. Applicability

This Commission was given by Jesus Christ to the eleven on a mountain, probably the Mount of the Beatitudes, in Galilee. There is not sufficient evidence to hold that the five hundred mentioned by St. Paul in I Cor. 15: 6, 7, were present on this occasion. The Commission is, therefore, a purely personal one given to those whom Christ had already called and ordained to the work set forth in the Commission. It is not to be inferred from this statement that the Commission is limited in its application to the eleven only. The work to be done is coextensive with the promise contained in the Commission. This promise also militates against the view that the work was to be accomplished during the life time of the apostles. We can not therefore limit the Commission to the eleven only. Neither can we limit it to a select few whom we may know as the successors of the apostles. From the very nature of the case the apostles can have no successors as such. "Apostolic succession," Dean Alford says, "is a fiction of which the New Testament contains no trace." Neither can we limit the application of the Commission to the clergy. This position obtains altogether too largely in the church. In consequence of this position the responsibility of evangelizing the world has been laid upon a certain few whom the church has seen proper to set apart for the work of the ministry. We rather hold that this Commission was given to the eleven as the representatives of the universal church. In consequence of this position the responsibility of evangelizing the world has been laid upon a certain few whom the church has seen proper to set apart for the work of the ministry. We rather hold that this Commission was given to the eleven as the representatives of the universal church. If the Commission is referable only to the eleven, and many so insist, then by the same process of argumentation we must conclude that the command to observe the Lord's Supper and the concomitant ordinances is also referable to the eleven only. The Roman Catholic church is, at the least, consistent in administering the sacraments to the priesthood only. We can not thus limit the applicability of the Commission. Neither did the early church so limit it. For with the Commission fresh in their minds they "went everywhere preaching the gospel." Every disciple of Christ is, in a measure, responsible for the work set forth in the Commission. This interpretation best accords with Christ's teaching elsewhere, that the duty of every disciple, everywhere and in every age is to manifest the gospel to the world. Matt. 5:13-16; Mk. 4:21; Luke 10:1.

II. The Authority. Vs. 18

Too much emphasis can not be laid upon the teachings of this verse. In it is to be found both the authority and the purpose of

missionary effort. Jesus Christ is the source of all authority in the church and for whom all authority must be exercised by the church. He only could say "All power is given unto me both in heaven and on the earth." The Commission is, therefore, directly traceable to the wisdom and power of God. His eternal purpose is back of it and his almighty power pledged to its support. To condemn missions is blasphemy; to wholly abandon missions is apostasy. The work can not fail, neither the worker since the power and wisdom of God thru Jesus Christ is pledged to its support. Take heart, fellow Christian. Here is your source of authority and power. He is the inspiration of every missionary movement of the church. Jesus has promised to accompany every worker, even unto the end, and he alone is sufficient.

III. The Attitude of the Church. Vs. 19 Going. (Gr.)

The word *therefore*, is not found in the original, altho it expresses the connection between verses 18 and 19. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth," Christ says, therefore, "going, disciple all nations." It is because all power has been given unto him, that his disciples, strong in the assurance of this power, are to go everywhere fulfilling his command. This verse contains Christ's call for an aggressive ministry. The verb signifies a going from place to place. The early disciples so understood its force and hence we read that they "went everywhere preaching the word." The verb sets forth the missionary aspect of Christianity. Christ said it should be what it always has been when pure, a *going spreading religion*.

But the *going* is not the act emphasized in the Commission. Only a circumstantial Aorist participle is used here. The verb is not in the imperative mood as we have been too generally told. The form used here has been too much disregarded and because of this many fanatical things have been said and written concerning the missionary aspect of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Aorist participle always denotes action antecedent to that denoted by the principle verb of the sentence. This participle is sometimes translated in the New Testament by a present participle, (Mk. 1:31; 5:36,) and frequently by a finite verb with *and*. (Acts 14:19; 27:13; II Tim. 4:11 et. al.) The meaning is that *going precedes, is in order to* and depends upon the *discipling* of the nations. The participle *going* expresses what should be the normal attitude of the church toward the undisciplined nations of the world. But the word *going* is not the *emphatic* word in the commission. Many err here. The English translation, in part, is the cause of the error. There is no command *to go*. The command is as we shall see presently, *to disciple*. The word and act of *going* is not, therefore, to be emphasized to the exclusion of all things else. We hold that the *going* depends upon the *discipling*,